48

MINUTES

OF THE

FORTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI

Baptist Association,

HELD WITH THE

SAREPTA CHURCH, FRANKLIN COUNTY, MISS.,

September 30th, and October 1st and 2d, 1854.

NATCHEZ.

PRINTED AT THE DAILY COURIER BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

1854.

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FORTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

SAREPTA CHURCH, FRANKLIN CO., MISS., }
SEPTEMBER 30, 1854. }

The Mississippi Baptist Association convened pursuant to adjournment, with the Sarepta Church, Franklin county, Mississippi. In the absence of Elders Calvin Magee and H. McKnight, the Introductory Sermon was preached by Elder F. Clark, from John v. 39; Subject—*The Great Importance of Searching the Scriptures.*

ITEM 1. After a short recess, the Delegates from the several Churches composing this Association, assembled in the Church, were called to order, and prayer was made by the Moderator.

2. Appointed Bros. W. P. Dodds and Jas. B. Quin reading Clerks.

3. Called for and read letters from twenty-six Churches, enrolled the names of their Delegates, and minuted their statistics.

4. The Association proceeded to the election of officers for the ensuing year—Bros. G. P. Claughton and J. A. Jenkins tellers: who reported that Elder Z. Reeves and Bro. C. C. Cain were re-elected Moderator and Clerk.

5. Bro. C. L. Oliver asked and obtained leave of absence from farther attendance on this body.

6. Brethren H. B. Cole, J. B. Quin and J. A. Jenkins were appointed a Committee on Preaching.

7. Ministering brethren of our faith and order were invited to take seats with us, and to assist with their counsel in our deliberations.

8. Received corresponding letters from sister Associations, and the right hand of fellowship was extended to their Messengers, as follows:

PEARL RIVER—Elder Wm. Fortenberry, with a package of minutes.

UNION—Elder Wm. Mullens and Bro. J. Scott, with a letter and package of minutes.

EASTERN LOUISIANA—Elder G. Mullen, with a package of minutes.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER—Received a package of minutes.

9. Appointed correspondence as follows:

PEARL RIVER—Elders S. Coker and Z. Reeves, Messengers, and Bro. G. P. Claughton to write.

UNION—Elder A. McKenzie and Bro. H. B. Cole, Messengers, and Bro. Charles Stewart to write.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER—Bros. J. E. Bates and J. W. Felder, Messengers, and Bro. J. E. Bates to write.

EASTERN LOUISIANA—Elder T. M. Bond and Bro. M. Brian, Messengers, and Elder T. M. Bond to write.

EBENEZER—Elders Z. Reeves and W. Clark, Messengers, and Elder W. Clark to write.

10. Appointed a Committee on Finance, viz: Bros. J. E. Bates, G. P. Claughton and R. Thompson.

11. Elders S. Coker, F. Clark and W. Clark, were appointed a Committee of Arrangements and Revision.

12. On motion, the Moderator and Clerk were added to said Committee.

13. The Committee on Preaching reported that Elders Z. Reeves, F. Clark and T. M. Bond, preach on the Lord's Day, in the order of their names.

14. Bro. R. J. Causey presented his resignation as Treasurer of this Body, which was, on motion, received.

15. On motion, Bro. J. A. Jenkins was appointed Treasurer in the place of Bro. Causey, resigned.

16. On motion, the Report of the Committee appointed by this Body to settle a difficulty between the Zion Hill and Mount Olive Churches, was called for, read, and laid on the table until Monday morning, and the Committee discharged.

17. Bro. J. W. Felder asked and obtained leave of absence from further attendance on this Body.

The stand having been occupied since the Introductory by Elders Wm. Fortenberry and Elbert Rush, the Association adjourned until morning at 9 o'clock.

Concluding prayer by Elder Wm. Mullen.

EXERCISES OF THE SABBATH.

The congregation assembled at the stand, in a beautiful grove, near a large spring of sparkling water, when Elder Z. Reeves preached from the 3d chapter of John, vii. verse: Subject—*The New Birth.* He was followed by Elder F. Clark, from 1st Kings, 3d chapter and ix. verse: Subject—*The Christian Warfare.* An intermission of an hour was given for refreshments; after which the congregation again assembled, and Elder T. M. Bond preached from 2d Timothy, 2d chapter and xv. verse: Subject—*The Gospel Ministry.* The exercise was concluded with a very feeling exhortation, when many came forward, tremblingly asking an interest in the prayers of the people of God.

Statistical Table of the Churches.

Churches.	Delegates.	Counties.	Postoffice.	Baptized	Received by Letter	Excluded	Restored	Dead	Dismissed	Whites	Colored	Total in Fellowship	Ministers	Copies of Minutes	Contributions	Sunday Meetings
N.Providence	R. Thompson, S. Gardner,	Amite,	Liberty,	8	1	..	..	3	5	73	41	114	..	40	$ 5 00	4th
Ebenezer,	T. J. Andrews, D. A. Faust,	Amite,	Rose Hill,	12	..	2	..	1	2	81	46	127	..	60	10 00	3rd
East Fork,	J. W. Felder, Z. Reeves,	Amite,	Liberty,	..	3	1	..	1	1	74	17	91	1	50	6 00	2nd
Zion Hill,	C. C. Cain, J. A. Jenkins,	Amite,	Zion Hill,	11	5	..	1	2	8	58	13	71	..	50	6 00	3rd
Shiloh,	No Communicat'n															
Gallilee,	G. P. Claughton, S. Jackson,	Amite,	Centreville,	13	3	3	2	2	3	104	27	131	1	70	10 00	2nd
Hopewell,	J. E. Ford, W. P. Dodds,	Franklin,	Meadville,	3	..	..	..	1	4	14	5	19	..	20	5 00	....
Marshill,	J. H. Flemming,	Amite,	Smithdale,	2	..	1	..	..	5	31	3	34	..	35	4 00	1st
Salem,	J. Coney, S. Blackwell,	Pike,	Rocky Creek	16	2	..	..	..	8	53	9	62	..	35	5 00	3rd
Friendship,	C. L. Oliver, J. E. Byrd,	Franklin,	Friendship,	40	7	..	1	3	1	93	7	101	2	75	8 00	2nd
Ramah,	W. Clark,	Amite,	Smithdale,	..	..	..	..	..	1	20	1	21	..	15	3 75	2nd
Jackson,	E. Young, Milton Brian,	E. Feliciana,	Jackson, La.,	17	3	2	..	4	..	24	123	147	1	35	6 00	1, 3,
Mt. Pleasant,	M. Moke, Tho. Reeves,	Pike,	Holmesville,	1	1	..	1	..	2	28	4	32	..	40	5 00	4th
Liberty,	Jas. E. Bates,	Amite,	Liberty,	6	..	2	..	..	3	137	54	191	2	75	10 00	3rd
Mt. Zion,	D. B. Cain, H. S. Anderson,	Franklin,	Meadville,	13	5	3	1	1	1	56	11	67	..	60	6 00	....
Friendship,	Lott Wilson, W. Richmond,	Pike,	Holmesville,	..	4	1	..	..	..	14	..	14	..	20	4 00	3rd
Spring Hill,	A. Richmond, M. Neill,	Franklin,	Homochitto,	15	2	..	2	..	..	50	5	55	..	50	6 00	1st
Mt. Zion,	T. J. Hudson, M. Foster,	Copiah,	Colamer,	51	5	..	..	1	4	114	7	121	..	100	10 00	4th
Bogue Chitto,	J. B. Quin, J. Walker,	Pike,	Holmesville,	5	2	..	..	..	3	97	20	117	..	100	10 00	1st
Mt. Moriah,	S. Coker, W. Turner,	Lawrence,	Brookhaven	2	8	1	..	4	1	34	3	37	1	35	6 00	3rd
Sarepta,	E. McCaa, H. B. Cole,	Franklin,	Malcolm,	3	2	1	..	..	..	27	2	29	1	30	5 00	3rd
Macedonia,	J. Cagle, E. Applewhite,	Copiah,	Friendship,	7	6	2	..	..	..	29	4	33	2	35	4 00	1st
Percy's Creek	F. Clark, T. C. S. Chambers,	Wilkinson,	Percy's Cr'k,	48	6	2	3	..	10	53	43	96	1	50	8 00	2, 4,
Mt. Olive,	Wm. C. Smith, N. S. Rollinson,															
St. Helena,	B. Carter, W. J. Dove,	St. Helena,	Darlington,	13	7	..	..	1	4	18	9	27	..	25	3 00	1st
Bethel,	T. M. Bond,	Wilkinson,	Woodville,	2	13	..	..	..	3	18	6	24	1	40	4 00	2, 3,
				288	80	21	11	24	69	1301	460	1761	13	1145	149	75

MONDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 2, 1854.

18. The Association met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Elder S. Coker.

19. The Committee of Arrangements and Revision presented their report, which was received, adopted, and the committee discharged, to-wit:

Your Committee on Arrangement and Revision beg leave to report as follows:

1. Call the Roll.
2. Read the Rules of Decorum.
3. Call for Reports.
4. Call for the Circular Letter.
5. Call for Corresp'd'g Letters.
6. Call for Queries.
7. Motions and Resolutions.
8. Appointments.
9. Adjournment.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

S. COKER, Chairman.

On motion, it was resolved that the above be the order of business for the future in this Association, subject to amendment.

20. The Roll was called.

21. Read the Rules of Decorum and Powers of the Association.

22. Reports called for. The Committee on Preaching reported that Elders Wm. Mullen, Wm. Fortenberry, and S. Coker, preach today in the order of their names.

23. The Financial Committees made their respective reports, which were received and adopted.

[VIDE APPENDICES, A., B. & C.]

24. The Committee appointed by this Association at its last session to wait on the Zion Hill and Mount Olive Churches, and by their advice and assistance endeavor to settle the grievance or difficulty existing between them, made the following report, which was received and agreed to, to-wit:

To the Mississippi Baptist Association:

DEAR BRETHREN: In compliance with a resolution of your body at its last session, appointing a Committee to visit the Mount Olive and Zion Hill Churches, and to settle if possible a difficulty existing between said Churches, Wilson Clark, J. B. Quinn, and G. P. Claughton met with the Mount Olive Church on the 28th of January, 1854, together with the Committee from the Zion Hill Church, viz: Isa. Cain, C. C. Cain, and Jas. A. Jenkins.

A PROPOSITION.

We, the Mount Olive Church propose the following as a fair and proper course for investigating the grievance presented to the Association against this Church by the Zion Hill Church:

1st. The Committee appointed by the Association shall organize in a proper manner.

2d. The Zion Hill Church shall present their grievance in writing.

3d. This Church shall then make her defence.

4th. The Committee shall make out an impartial report of all the facts presented by each Church, a copy of which shall be given to each Church, and the Committee present the same as their report to the Association at her next session.

Elder Wilson Clark was chosen Moderator, and G. P. Claughton Secretary. Members present of the regular Baptist Churches invited to seats with us: J. R. Temples, J. A. Richmond, and O. P. Claughton accepted the invitation.

The Baptist Church at Zion Hill makes the following charge against the Baptist Church at Mount Olive, viz:

That the Church at Mount Olive retained, by their consent, as their Pastor, Rowland Wilkinson, after he had been excluded from the said Baptist Church at Zion Hill.

Mount Olive Church.—We deny the above charge on Gospel Order.

The Zion Hill Church submitted the following testimony in support of the above charge, to-wit: On the 18th of December, 1852, Rowland Wilkinson offered the following resolutions to the Church, to-wit:

And as there are so many institutions of men called benevolent institutions, and this Church believing it to be her duty to provide for the peace and harmony of her members, she therefore declares non-fellowship with all the unscriptural institutions of the day, such as Theological Schools, State Conventions, Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, and Temperance Societies, and all their kindred relations, holding them to be unscriptural.

This being decided in the negative, Rowland Wilkinson was called on by the Moderator to know if he would abide the decision of the Church. He requested time to give his answer. On the 19th of February, 1853, a Committee was appointed by the Church to wait on Brothers Rowland Wilkinson and John Wilkinson, and their wives, Margaret and Philadelphia Wilkinson, and notify them to attend at the next Conference and satisfy the Church whether they will abide the decision of said Church, made on the resolutions above-mentioned.

On the 19th of March, 1853, Rowland Wilkinson answered in writing, as follows:

Amite County, Miss., March 11th, 1853.

To the Zion Hill Church, Amite County, Miss.:

It is now more than twenty-seven years since I became a member of the Baptist Church, and during the last twelve years I have been a minister in that denomination. At the time of my connection with the Church I believed the faith and practice of this professed body of Christ to be in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Word of God, being founded upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Since which time, however, I have with many others been grieved to witness the gradual introduction of error, both in faith an dpractice, so that I have been, and am now pain-

fully convinced that the Baptist Church, or Church of that denomination as they are popularly known, are not now, as a body, what they formerly were, but have widely departed from the faith and simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, together with the scenes of trial and persecution through which I have been lately called to pass, have at last compelled me to believe that the prevailing ministry and the Churches of the Baptist denomination so called, are not the servants of Christ, or the bodies which are governed by the laws of his kingdom. In thus expressing myself, I would not be understood as expressing the belief that there are not those in the ministry and Churches whom the great Head of the Church has set apart to the work, or who are subjects of his spiritual kingdom, purchased and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. It is believed, however, that they have become entangled with the yoke of bondage, and that they do not truly rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. And this they would openly acknowledge, if it were not that their character and reputation would be in jeopardy. Therefore, my own personal observation and experience, however, have convinced me, as before observed, that the Churches and Ministry have departed from the faith and simplicity of the Gospel; and such being the honest conviction of my own mind, after much prayerful and serious examination of the Word of God, I must, however painful and self-denying the step, hereby formally withdraw my membership from the Church and from the Ministry, and inform you that I shall not hereafter consider myself in anywise connected with the Baptist Church Ministry or denomination as it is now known or understood. My reasons for this step, among others which might be named, are as follows: Because this Church has recently refused to provide for the peace and harmony of her members against unscriptural institutions of men, of late origin. Because Ministers who have not enjoyed superior worldly advantages or literary qualifications, but who have nevertheless been greatly blessed of God in the work of the Ministry, are now generally but lightly esteemed, and crowded aside to make room for those who have not been called of God, but have merely received the literary honors of a college, or the diploma of a Theological Seminary. Because professed ministers thus uncalled by the spirit have had no dispensation of the Gospel committed to them, but are rather such as teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Because Churches under the influence of such a Ministry must and will depart from the Gospel of Christ, both in faith and practice. Because many schemes and inventions of merely human origin have been sought out and introduced into the Churches, which are nowhere authorized by the Word of God, but are contrary thereto, both in nature and spirit. Because Conventions, Associations, Councils, Ministerial Conferences, and other professedly religious institutions are of human origin and invention, and, as at present conducted, they greatly interfere with and impair the independence of Churches, both in faith and practice.

These, in brief, are some of my reasons, among others of a similar nature, which have convinced me, as before remarked, that the Ministry and Churches have departed from the faith and simplicity of the Gospel, and such departures are allowed and tolerated in the Churches, although in the beginning it was not so. For years, however, I have been vainly hoping there would ere long be a reformation in these respects, but my own recent experience has convinced me that the evil has so generally pervaded the entire mass as to preclude reason for hope, and thus I am compelled to withdraw from the Ministry and membership of the Baptist Church, as it is now popularly called. I shall not, however, thereby yield my position as a professed believer in the Baptist faith, as such, and would still humbly acknowledge my belief in those sentiments and principles which so eminently distinguished the Baptist denomination in this country during the early period of its history. Since that time, however, a great and deplorable change has taken place, so that the evil consequences which the earlier fathers of the Baptist cause so confidently predicted and feared, are now more than realized. Large and powerful monied institutions for the purpose of converting souls and otherwise promoting the cause of Him whose kingdom is not of this world, have been established. Thousands upon thousands are annually lavished upon professed Ministers of the Cross, the officers, subordinates, and employees, whose well paid agency is required in the collection of funds for carrying out the avowed purpose of their professed religious establishments, whose very life, soul, and existence is money, and money continually.

With these views, therefore, and the painful convictions of my own mind in respect to the present state of the Ministry and Churches, I must, as a professed disciple of Christ—however unworthy—declare non-fellowship with the new schemes, and inventions, and doctrines, and commandments of men, which now so extensively prevail in the modern Baptist Churches, which are but the unfruitful works of darkness, and should be reproved by all who seek the old paths, and who would earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints. For this I expect to have my name cast out as evil, but in every persecution, and trial, and reproach which I am called to suffer, for bearing my feeble testimony in behalf of Christ and his truth, I would count it all joy, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the despised people of God than to enjoy the applause and popularity of the enemies of the Gospel for a season, esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the kingdoms of this world, or the glory of them.

In withdrawing from a denomination with which my earliest religious associations and sympathies have been so long and intimately connected, and formally separating myself from the communion and fellowship of those among that people with whom I have so often taken sweet council together, and whom I must esteem as the honored Servants of the Cross and partakers of the common salvation, I feel it to be one of the most painful and self-denying acts of my life thus to sever a relationship which was once so tender and endearing. It is

not, however, because I love them less, but as I humbly trust it is because of the attachment which I entertain towards the institutions, ordinances, and truth of Him who alone is King in Zion. I can indeed truly sympathize with them in their anxieties and fears, and would fervently hope they may yet speedily be delivered from all spiritual bondage, and once more rejoice in the liberty of Christ. But deliverance from the corruptions of the Gospel, and the unholy and oppressive influence which men and seducers from the truth are now exerting in the denomination, can never be experienced while going in the way of Cain, and running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward. The people of God are commanded to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, and to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, being assured by the Word of Him who cannot lie, that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; and is the testimony of the Holy Word of God, which is as a light that shineth in a dark place. In obedience, therefore, to the teachings of that Word, and my own convictions of duty, I herewith communicate this letter of withdrawal and declare myself henceforth no longer in connection with the new order of Baptists, as they are popularly known and understood.

ROWLAND WILKINSON.

After reading the above answer, on motion it was

Resolved, That this Church call a Presbytery of Ministers to attend and sit in council with this Church at its next Conference, in relation to the above answer of Brother Wilkinson, and the charges therein made, and that Rev. W. Clark, with a member from Ramah Church, Rev. A. McKenzie, with a member from Galilee Church, and Rev. H. McKnight, with a member from Liberty Church, be invited to attend at said Conference, and that two members each from New Providence, East Fork, and Mount Zion Churches be invited to seats with this Church at said Conference, on Saturday, April 16th, 1853.

Members from the following Churches were present, and were, on motion, constituted a committee to examine the action of the Church, to-wit: Galilee, New Providence, Liberty, East Fork, Marshill, Ramah, Mount Zion, and Mount Olive.

On motion, the Church requested the committee to examine into the action and proceedings of this Church in relation to the difficulty between this Church and Brother R. Wilkinson and others, and to make a decision thereon.

Motion before the Committee, that the action and conduct of this Church in relation to the resolutions offered by R. Wilkinson are proper and scriptural—which said motion was decided unanimously in the affirmative.

On motion the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted by the Church, to-wit:

WHEREAS, At the regular Conference of the Zion Hill Church, held on the 18th day of December, A. D. 1852, Rowland Wilkinson,

a member of said Church, presented a certain preamble and resolutions for the action of the Church, declaring a non-fellowship for certain and sundry religious institutions, with which said Church felt it her duty to co-operate; and *whereas*, upon the vote being taken on said resolutions, they were rejected by a large majority of the Church: he, the said Rowland Wilkinson, with three other members, voting for their adoption: and *whereas*, the said Rowland Wilkinson was called upon by the Moderator to give an expression whether he would abide the decision of the Church, he asking time for reflection; and *whereas*, he, the said Rowland Wilkinson, was, by order of said Church, duly notified to attend at the Conference of said Church in March, and satisfy said Church of the course he intended to pursue relative to the decision of the Church above mentioned; and *whereas*, he, the said Rowland Wilkinson, did attend and appear before said Church in Conference, on the 19th day of March, 1853, and file his answer in writing, and in said answer charged the Baptist Churches and ministry with having departed from the faith, practices, customs, and usages of the Baptist Churches, and with being knowingly entangled with the institutions of men alone, for the sake of filthy lucre; also charging that some of the ministry would leave the error of their way, were it not for the fear of jeopardizing their reputation. And for these and sundry other reasons, justifies his course in declaring non-fellowship with the Baptist Church and ministry, as they are now known and understood; therefore be it—

Resolved, By the Zion Hill Church, in Conference sitting, That the answer of the said Rowland Wilkinson, above referred to, is not a satisfactory justification for the conduct of him, the said Rowland Wilkinson, towards this Church.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Church, the said Rowland Wilkinson has, by his own conduct, rendered himself liable to exclusion from this Church.

Resolved, That Rowland Wilkinson be excluded from the fellowship of this Church.

DEAR BRETHREN: The above are the facts in this case that were presented to your Committee; after hearing the same, your Committee labored to point out the error, and to effect, if possible, a reconciliation between the Churches, but failed to do so.

Respectfully submitted. W. CLARK, Mo.

G. P. CLAUGHTON, Secy.

In connexion with, and in addition to, the above Report, on motion, it was ordered that the Clerk be required to procure and publish a portion of the Record of the Zion Hill Church, in relation to said difficulty, which has unintentionally been omitted, to-wit:

"ZION HILL CHURCH, Saturday, Aug. 20, 1853.

The Church met in Conference, it being reported that the Mount

Olive Church had called, as her pastor, Rowland Wilkinson, who had been excluded from this Church; therefore—

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed to visit said Church, and ascertain if such be the case; and if the Committee find the said Rowland Wilkinson as their pastor, then to admonish them that, by their action, they have aggrieved this Church, and desire them to desist from their course.

Bro. J. Cain, C. C. Cain and Lewis McGehee, were appointed said Committee."

"ZION HILL CHURCH, Sept. 17, 1853.

The Church met in Conference. The Committee appointed to visit Mt. Olive Church, reported in substance as follows: 'That they met said Church in Conference, and upon inquiry, found that Rowland Wilkinson was the pastor of said Church, with her consent. The Committee then stated to said Church, that the Zion Hill Church felt aggrieved at her conduct, and admonished her to desist, but received no satisfaction as to the course she intended to pursue.' Which said Report was received and the Committee discharged."

25. On motion, the following preamble and resolutions were read and unanimously adopted, to-wit:

WHEREAS, We have satisfactory evidence before us, that one Rowland Wilkinson, once a minister of the Gospel, was, for improper conduct, legally excluded from the fellowship of the Zion Hill Church, (a member of our body,) in April, 1853; and *whereas*, The said Church, at the time of his exclusion, legally demanded of him his credentials as a minister of the Baptist denomination; and *whereas*, he still retains his credentials, and claims himself to be a regular minister of said denomination, even since his exclusion from said Church; therefore be it

Resolved, That we feel it to be our duty to make the above statement public, for the purpose of warning the Churches of our denomination and the public of his true standing.

26. On motion, the following preamble and resolution was read and unanimously adopted, to-wit:

WHEREAS, We have evidence before us, that the Mount Olive Church has continued in her fellowship, as her pastor, one Rowland Wilkinson, whom she knew had been excluded from the Zion Hill Church since April, 1853; and *whereas*, we have received from her, whilst she was under the censure of her sister Church for the same, an abusive and insulting letter, casting censure and reproach upon this Association and the Baptist denomination generally, and attempting to withdraw from our Union: therefore be it—

Resolved, That we look upon such conduct as highly disorderly, and we hereby withdraw our Union and fellowship from said Church

27. The Circular Letter was called for, read, and adopted.

28. Corresponding Letters to Sister Associations were called for, read, and adopted.

29. On motion, the thanks of this body are due to Brother R. J. Causey, former Treasurer of this body, for the impartial and faithful manner in which he has discharged his duty.

On motion, the following preamble and resolution was adopted, to-wit:

WHEREAS, The evils growing out of the use of intoxicating drinks is a crying sin with many Church members. Therefore,

Resolved, That we request all our members to do all in their power to suppress the improper use of all intoxicating liquors.

Resolved, That the thanks of this body are due to the Brethren and friends of this neighborhood for the liberal and bountiful manner in which they have entertained us during our stay among them.

Resolved, That we tender our thanks to the Moderator and Clerk of this Association for the faithful and impartial manner in which they have each discharged their respective duties.

30. Appointed Elder F. Clark to preach the next Introductory Sermon, and Elder Z. Reeves his Alternate.

31. Appointed the Clerk to superintend the printing and distributing thirteen hundred copies of the Minutes of this meeting of the Association, and that he receive fifteen dollars for the same, and that he draw on the Treasurer for funds to defray the expenses of the same.

32. Appointed Brother W. P. Dodds to prepare the next Circular Letter.

33. Appointed the next meeting of this body with the Ebenezer Church, 12 miles South of Liberty, Amite County, Mississippi, commencing on Saturday before the first Sabbath in October, A. D. 1855.

34. The Minutes were read for correction, and after a few appropriate remarks from the Moderator, we were dismissed.

ZACHARIAH REEVES, Moderator.

C. C. CAIN, Clerk.

Ministers of the Mississippi Baptist Association.

SHADRACH COKER,
ZACHARIAH REEVES,
HAMILTON MCKNIGHT,
WILSON CLARK,
ALEX. MCKENZIE,
M. S. SHIRK,
J. H. SMILEY,
WM. THOMPSON,
T. M. BOND,
ELISHA MCCAA,
WM. EAST,
F. CLARK,
WM. BAILEY.

Licentiates.—CARROLL CLARK, T. J. HUDSON, C. L. OLIVER, ELBERT RUSH.

Appendix A.

Report of the Financial Committee.

Debit.

In the hands of the Treasurer, - - -	$148 08	
Contributions from the Churches, - - -	149 75	—297 83

Credit.

Paid for printing Minutes of 1853, - -	$ 55 00	
" " Superintending the same - -	15 00	
" S. Coker, - - - - -	8 00	
" Elihu McCaa, - - - -	10 00	
" Z. Reeves, - - - - -	14 00	
" J. H. Smiley, - - - -	10 00	
" " Printing these Minutes, - - -	70 00	
" " Superintending the same, - - -	15 00	
		—$197 00
Balance in hands of Treasurer, - - -		$100 83

Respectfully submitted,

G. P. Claughton,
J. E. Bates,
R. Thompson,
} Committee.

Appendix B.

Jas. B. Quinn, Treasurer of Missionary Fund, in Account, with Miss. Baptist Association.

Your Treasurer charges himself with the following sums received on account of said fund, to-wit:

For this amount received for Foreign Missions,	$ 63 00	
" " " " " Domestic "	16 40	
" " " " " Indian "	25 15	
" " " " " F. Bible Society,	33 65	
Balance in hands of Treasurer, as per last rep't,	1 00	—$139 20

Your Treasurer prays allowance for the following disbursements, viz:

By this amount paid Arch'd Thomas, Treasurer for Foreign Missions, as per receipt No. 1, -	62 00	
By this amount sent W. Hornbuckle, Treasurer for Domestic Missions, as per receipt No. 2,	15 00	
By this amount paid A. McKenzie, Agent for Indian Miss. Association, receipt No. 3, -	25 00	
By this amount paid Chas. A. Fuller, Treasurer Bible Board S. B. Convention, receipt No. 4,	32 00	—$134 15
Balance in Treasurer's hands, - -		$ 5 05

I would beg leave to report the sum of $83 35, collected at your last Annual Meeting by Elder A. McKenzie, general agent for Indian Missions; also, $25 collected by said agent at Bogue Chitto Church, on the 2d day of July, 1854, and $54 20 collected at Bogue Chitto Church by W. M. Farrar, agent for Foreign Missions, on the 5th day of March, 1854—making in all $162 55 for Indian and Foreign Missions, in addition to the above report.

All of which is respectfully submitted, this September 30th, 1854.

JAS. B. QUIN, Treas. Miss. Fund.

Your Committee have examined the above report, and find it correct.

G. P. CLAUGHTON,
R. THOMPSON,
JAS. E. BATES. } Committee.

Appendix C.

Report of Committee on Missionary Funds, Received at this Association and Paid Over to the Treasurer.

From New Providence Church, for Indian Missions $8. Domestic Missions $1; Foreign Missions $5; Bible Cause $1,	$ 15 00	
From Zion Hill—Bible Cause $1, Foreign Missions $1 25,	2 25	
From Jackson, from colored members, for African Mission,	5 00	
From Mt. Zion, Copiah Co.—Indian Missions, $9 75, Bible Cause, 55c.,	10 30	
From Bogue Chitto—Bible Cause	5 00	
From Mt. Moriah—Indian Missions,	12 55	
From H. B. Cole—Bible Cause,	50	
From Macedonia—Foreign Missions,	4 00	
From Percy's Creek—Home Mission, for Elder T. M. Bond, to labor for Home Missions,	21 00	$ 75 60

RECAPITULATION.

Foreign Missions,	$ 10 25	
Domestic Missions,	22 00	
Indian Missions,	30 30	
Bible Cause,	8 05	
African Missions	5 00	$ 75 60

All of which is respectfully submitted.

W. P. DODDS,
A. RICHMOND,
W. TURNER, } Committee.

CIRCULAR LETTER,

BY ELDER M. S. SHIRK.

Beloved Brethren: Through the kind providence of our God, we have been favored with another holy Convocation—the forty-eighth Anniversary of our Mississippi Baptist Association—and in taking leave of your Delegates, brethren with whom we have sweetly counselled, permit us again affectionately to address you our Circular Letter.

Its theme—*The Christian Sabbath*—is one which involves the glory of God, the prosperity of the Church, our national blessings, and the welfare of the world.

You are aware that among professed Christians, there has been much controversy respecting the morality of the Sabbath. Orthodoxy in general affirms—Heterodoxy denies it. The decision of this question must depend on the date of the Sabbath.

If it was given to man in the *beginning*, it is a law to mankind as such, and binding in all ages and nations. If, on the contrary, it was first promulgated in the wilderness, then it was a law to the Jews only, and was abrogated with their other peculiar institutions. Some new evidence is then necessary to prove that a day of rest is obligatory on Christians.

What now are we to understand by the morality of a precept? Philosophers variously define it to consist in—"*That which is right*;" "*That which is conformable to reason*;" "*That which is conformable to truth*;" *That which is agreeable to the fitness of things*;" "*That which contributes to the general good*;" etc. But are we always competent judges of what is morally right, of what is conformable to reason, to truth, to the fitness of things, and for the general good? These are principles too unwieldy for our grasp. They pre-suppose a degree of knowledge and of wisdom to discern, which man does not really possess. Especially, they could never be intended to be the ground of moral obligation to mankind at large. We must therefore seek something more simple and level to human capacity. Well may it inspire gratitude, that amid this multiplicity of definitions and abstruse speculations, we enjoy a clearer light. To us, who are favored with Revelation, questions concerning the abstract foundation of morality are unnecessary. For on whatever ground the precepts of the moral law are supposed to rest, the reason that we are bound to obey them, is the will of God. Unless, therefore, our morality proceeds from love to God—in other words, from respect to his will—it can constitute no part of religion.

The question with us, then, is not what is conformable to the various definitions of morality, but what is agreeable to the will of our Maker. This is easily ascertained by reference to His own Inspired Word. Thus the knowledge of morality is brought within the reach of all who can read or hear the Word of God.

The Moral Law was the law given to man at his creation. Obedience to it was the condition of the covenant into which his Maker entered with him, in the name of his posterity. It has constituted an essential part of all the Divine dispensations ever since.

Its obligations are not determined by geographical lines, but are founded in relations which subsist wherever there are human beings endowed with reason and volition. It was solemnly promulgated to the Israelites at Sinai, from amidst the thunderings of the smoking, burning, quaking mount, and whilst their national and local laws have been abolished, the decalogue is still binding.

Jesus Christ, as if to place the perpetuity of the Moral Law beyond dispute, himself re-enacted and adapted it to his religion, and required all his disciples to conform to it. "I came not," says he, "to destroy, but to fulfill it." He died to make it honorable. Having redeemed us from its curse, he came forth from the tomb, re-asserted its claims, and re-proclaimed in the ears of an astonished world, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written therein."

We now conceive that the question respecting the perpetuity of the Moral Law is fully established; and with it we have also established the perpetuity of the obligation to observe religiously and sacredly the Sabbath. Whoever, therefore, whether individuals or nations, deny the obligation to observe the Sabbath day, they deny the whole law, and are necessarily infidels and atheists. No sooner had France abolished the Sabbath, than with the next breath she proclaimed "there is no God but reason, and no hereafter except the grave."

It is a moral duty, then, that men should devote a portion of their time to the service of God. *The portion* is the subject of positive command—one day in seven—which day is determined by Genesis 2, ii. iii.: "And on the seventh day, God ended his work, which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which God created and made. And he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it," &c. Here Jehovah assigns the reason for setting apart that specific portion of time—the finishing of the works of creation. Its proclamation from Sinai, is but the re-enactment of a previous statute which, during the captivity had lain a dead letter. This is evident from Deuteronomy 5, xv., where the prophet, excusing their neglect while servants in Egypt, assigns their deliverance as a cause for re-imposing the obligation. But the obligations of the Sabbath are still binding. The Sabbath was made for MAN—*that man*, to whom it is appointed once to die, and after that, the judgment. It was designed, and is adapted, to aid him in preparing for those inevitable and momentous events, as well as to cheer and animate, sustain and comfort him as he goes forward to meet them. The question is therefore settled. The claims of the Sabbath are imperative on every conscience.

For the change of the day from the seventh to the first, we can produce no positive precept; yet we regard the example of the Apostles as equally authoritative, because they were guided, infallibly, by the Spirit, in all things relative to doctrine and worship.—*Ezekiel*, 43,

xxvi. xxvii—is thought to have reference to this change, though the language is symbolical, alluding to the ceremonial services of the temple.

Reasoning from analogy, however, it is plain that if the finishing of the works of creation was a reason why the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, there is reason *at least equally strong* for the consecration of the first day, on which our Saviour rose from the grave. Then the work of redemption was finished. Then God publicly testified that His incarnate Son had finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. And on account of its greatness and glory, and the unspeakable benefits which His resurrection procured to mankind, the day has been held in lasting remembrance by His Church.

Immediately after Christ's resurrection, the disciples began to assemble on the first day of the week for devotional purposes. Christ repeatedly met with them on that day, and by his presence sanctioned the change. The Apostles therefore continued it after His ascension.—*Acts*, 20, vii.; 1 *Cor.*, 16, ii.

St. John's Revelations, 1, x. says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," confirming the change.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 101, only six years after the death of St. John, writing to the Church, says, Let us, Christians, no more sabbatize—*i. e.* keep the seventh day as the Jews—but let us keep the LORD'S DAY. Let every one that loves Christ, keep holy the *Lord's Day*, the queen of days, the resurrection day, the highest of all days.

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 162, says, "Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor the *Lord's Day*, seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus completed his resurrection from the dead."

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, A. D. 167, says that "*On the Lord's Day every one of us Christians* keeps the Sabbath, meditating on the law, and rejoicing in the works of God."

Clement, of Alexandria, A. D. 192, says, "A Christian according to the command of the Gospel observes the *Lord's Day*, thereby glorifying the resurrection of the Lord." And again, "The *Lord's Day* is the eighth day."

Tertullian, of the same date, asserts that "the *Lord's Day* is the holy day of the Christian Church—we have nothing to do with the Jewish seventh day."

What now can be more clear than that a practice thus introduced, commemorative of such an event, sanctioned by Christ himself—the great head of the Church—and perpetuated in and by the Church for 1800 years, is to be regarded as of Divine authority, and equally binding with express precept.

Among Christians, there is scarcely any difference of opinion, in respect to the change of the day. A difference of sentiment, however, prevails in regard to the degree of strictness with which the Sabbath

should be observed. Some are for retaining all the rigor of the Jewish law, while others insist that now its severity is relaxed. Here we are liable to err—on the one hand, by overstraining the obligations of the day, and thus investing the Sabbath with a gloomy and forbidding aspect; and on the other, of granting such liberty as shall render it a day of idleness and amusement, rather than of devotion.

The Jews were required to observe the Sabbath with the utmost strictness. On this day, they were most religiously to abstain from all manner of labor, and not to leave their dwellings except in cases of absolute necessity or mercy, or to attend the worship of God. And whilst their altars smoked with sacrificial offerings, they, the inhabitants within the gates, and the stranger sojourning, must all consecrate the day to devotion. Thus it became a day of rest to man and to beast.

Whatever abatement from the rigors of the Mosaic Ritual is conceded, still the hallowed keeping of the Sabbath is obligatory, both as a command which *must* be obeyed, and as a provision for our good. For neither man nor beast can endure incessant daily toil. The hours of sleep are not sufficiently restorative, and they require an additional rest of one day in seven, by a constitutional necessity. Christians are required to observe it as a day of rest from worldly cares, as a day of meditation and prayer, in which we should cultivate communion with God—as a day of public worship and of private devotion. Whatever shall tend to promote these is proper and right. Whatever shall detract from this is wrong and must be avoided.

If the prosperity of the Church—for which, as individuals, and as a body, it is our duty and pleasure to study and labor—consists in the growing numbers and piety of our people; that prosperity is indissolubly connected with hallowing the Sabbath day. Let us once begin to feel that the obligations of the Sabbath terminate with the devotions of the Sanctuary, or that its restraints are so relaxed as to admit the intrusion of worldly cares and pleasures, and let us begin to look with complaisance on the desecration, by others, of God's holy day, and rest assured that the desecration will increase, and widen, and spread its influence not only over the world, but over the Church, until devotion itself, becoming a burden, the morning prayer will cease to be uttered or meditated. And when no longer the voice of supplication ascends from this ruined world, no longer will the spirit of truth and grace descend upon men in the house of God. No longer will the temples of the Most High allure the heavy laden sinner to the mercy seat; but untenanted, except by moles and bats, they will crumble to the dust. No more will the voice of a living ministry, the silver clarion of the Gospel, proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of Death's prison-doors to those that are bound. No longer will the salutary lessons of the Bible lead ungodly men to repentance and salvation, but the very records of Divine Truth will perish, and the very last ray of hope will be cut off from the troubled and desponding heart, and this world's population will again present the appalling spectacle of one mighty crowd—as at the first deluge—pressing hur-

riedly to ruin, but without a Noah to survive; of one universal Sodom, without an Abraham to intercede or a Lot to escape.

As, therefore, you would promote personal piety, regard sacredly the Sabbath. As you would promote family piety, regard religiously the Sabbath. Your children are creatures, and as such the property of God. He commits them to you, as his representatives and officers, to receeve and to train them for his service. As parents, therefore, you hav the power, the right, the authority, and the opportunity; upon you rests the obligation, and yours will be the guilt and yours the condemnation, if you do not train them to observe the Sabbath. Let it, then, not be neglected through carelessness or imbecility, *false affection or sloth;* but let them be instructed in the obligations of the Sabbath, and governed to a conformity with its reasonable requisitions in early life: and wherever, in this eventful world, their future lots may be cast, on the coming round of the Sabbath an air of sacredness will diffuse itself over the day. They will love the quietness of its hallowed morn; will love the Sanctuary; will love the chorus of devotion; will love the voice of persuasion; will love the retirement of the day and the leisure it brings for holy contemplation, and solemn audience with the Father who seeth in secret and who rewardeth openly.

Servants, too, are the creatures of God, as well as their masters. They are also sinners, and need His grace. They have been redeemed by the blood of His Son, and may attain salvation through Him. Then of course it is their duty and their right, and they are *bound* to rest from labor on the Sabbath, and to unite in the acknowledgment and worship of Jehovah—and the *master* to require and enforce the obligation. "It is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shall not *do any work;* thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy *man servant*, nor thy *maid servant*, nor thy *cattle*, nor the stranger that is within thy gates."—(Ex., 20, 10.)

As you would promote piety in the Church, let devotion characterize the entire Sabbath. But the piety of the Church can never rise higher than the aggregate piety of its individual members, and always falls as low. Personal religion will, therefore, be found the great desideratum for regulating all the disorders of the Church, exciting a healthy action among the members, and inspiring a holy zeal for God and the salvation of men. This cannot prevail except where brethren habitually respect and reverently observe the Sabbath. Sabbath-breaking should therefore become the subject of Church discipline, and offenders should receive, as they merit, the disapprobation, and persisting, the displeasure of, and excommunication from the Church.

To six days for secular business man has a right, for God has given it; but no man ever had the right to work seven days in a week. God says: "Six days shalt thou labor *and do all thy work.*" God never made but six working days. He never gave any more. Human governments *never* can give it, for it is not theirs. Therefore—human governments and human authority to the contrary notwithstanding—man is bound to rest one day in seven, and to devote the time to the

worship of God. Let, then, all the apologies which unbelievers and disobedient christians can invent for Sabbath violation, be accumulated. Condense and enforce them, with all the ability that man can give them, and this single sentence—"*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy!*"—would refute them all.

Here, perhaps, we are all guilty. Even as Ministers of God's word, it is to be feared, we are not always doing our full work. We have a law to expound and enforce, as well as a Gospel to proclaim, and a Savior to commend. May it not, then, be well to enquire occasionally how far the want of success in our labors in the one department is, humanly speaking, due to our comparative indifference to the other? Brethren, we can never know when a Sabbath comes but that it may be our last on earth. Wisdom, therefore, safety, interest, and duty all require that we should spend it in such a manner that, should it be the last, we may spend the next in Heaven.

May we live to see the time when the commandments of the decalogue shall be universally re-affirmed by the Church and people of the Most High; and restored to their primitive importance, there the world will be compelled to acknowledge their authority. Public opinion, thus reversed, magistrates will enforce their claims, not daring longer to violate the sanctity of their oath. Man thus brought to acknowledge his allegiance to his Maker, will respect the Sabbath; and universally, in city and in country, in village and in hamlet, merchants and manufacturers, farmers and mechanics, tradesmen and professional men of all classes, will vie with one another in promoting order and quiet, and in demanding a universal rest. May the Church be foremost in this reformatory work. Let us begin where desecration of the Sabbath begins, and "let every man work, over against his own house." Then will personal piety—then will the prosperity of Zion be promoted. Then shall a Sabbath's rest be enjoyed by the Church on earth, that shall issue in the rest of an eternal Sabbath with the Saints in glory. Be it yours, and ours, to share their bliss while we mingle in the melody of Heaven. Even so, Amen.